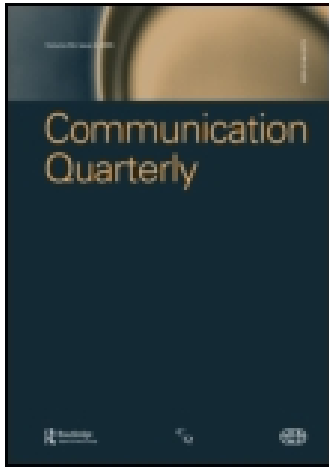


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Human Affection Exchange: V. Attributes of the Highly Affectionate

Kory Floyd

The present study examines differences in the individual- and social-level characteristics of high-affection and low-affection communicators. One hundred nine adults completed extensive questionnaires about their happiness, attachment patterns, susceptibility to depression and stress, mental health, social activity, relationship satisfaction, and other variables. Results revealed that highly affectionate people are advantaged in numerous psychological, mental, emotional, social, and relational characteristics, relative to those who communicate little affection to others.

KEY CONCEPTS affection, affection exchange theory, communication traits

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Affection has long been considered to be among the most fundamental of human needs (Burgoon & Hale, 1984; Rotter, Chance, & Phares, 1972; Schutz, 1958, 1966), and with good reason. It is one of the primary communicative behaviors contributing to the formation (Owen, 1987), maintenance (Bell & Healey, 1992), and quality (Floyd & Morman, 1997, 1998, 2000a) of human relationships. It contributes to physical health (Komisaruk & Whipple, 1998), mental well being (Downs & Javidi, 1990), and academic performance (Steward & Lupfer, 1987), and mitigates loneliness (Downs & Javidi, 1990) and depression (Oliver, Raftery, Reeb, & Delaney, 1993). Although there are certainly situations in which affection is unwelcome or problematic (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999; Floyd & Morman, 2000b; Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999), it is overwhelmingly associated with numerous positive outcomes.

Research on these positive outcomes has focused largely on the benefits of *receiving* affectionate communication, an approach that clearly makes intuitive sense. Missing from our understanding, however, is an explication of the benefits one engenders by *communicating* affection to others. Do people who are, by their general nature, highly affectionate enjoy advantages (at either the individual or social level) that are not shared by those who typically communicate very little affection to others? Not only can investigating this issue broaden and clarify our understanding of the value of affectionate communication, but the results can have compelling implications for interpersonal communicative competence. The present study, which compares groups of high-affection and low-affection communicators on a number of individual- and social-level characteristics, is guided by the principles of affection ex-

change theory, which is described subsequently.

Affection Exchange Theory

Affection exchange theory (AET: Floyd, 2001a, b) conceives of affectionate communication as an adaptive behavior that contributes to humans' superordinate motivations for viability (survival) and fertility (procreation). Assumed in the theory is the Darwinian principle of selective fitness, whereby those organisms best adapted to the demands of their environments are the most likely to survive and procreate. AET makes explicit links between the expression of affection and human viability and fertility. Specifically, affectionate communication purportedly increases chances for survival because it contributes to the development and maintenance of human pair bonds and exposes one to their associated resources, such as protection, companionship, financial security, intellectual stimulation, and love (Postulate 1). Moreover, affectionate communication is posited to increase individuals' short-term (or immediate) reproductive opportunities by signaling to potential sexual partners that one would be a fit parent (Postulate 2). The third postulate is that individuals' long-term fertility motivations (beyond their own generation) are further served when they communicate affection to their biological children, because the benefits associated with such affection make the children more suitable as mates, which increases the chances that the children will themselves reproduce and pass on their parents' genes to yet a new generation.

Fundamental to this chain of logic is the concept of affectionate communication as a resource that begets benefits not only when it is received but also when it is given. That is, it functions as a type of relational currency; and like literal currency it has value to the receiver, but it also has value to the sender because of the goods and benefits it engenders. A number of studies have already illuminated the physical and psychological benefits of *receiving* affectionate communication, usually within specific relational or situational contexts. In a multi-wave longitudinal study, for instance, Schwartz and Russek (1998) reported that the amount of love and caring college students had expressed to them by their parents was a significant negative predictor of both physical and psychological distress as many as 42 years later. Komisaruk and Whipple (1998) reported that those who received fewer expressions of affection than they desired tended to be more susceptible to psychosomatic illness (see also Janov, 2000), while Shuntich, Loh, and Katz (1998) found received affection to be negatively related to alcohol abuse and physical aggression toward family members. Several other studies have shown evidence of a positive relationship between received affection and individuals' overall psychological well being (Downs & Javidi, 1990; Green & Wildermuth, 1993; Prager & Burhmester, 1998; Quinn, 1983). Still other investigations have linked received affection to particular outcomes, such as self esteem (Barber & Thomas, 1986; Roberts & Bengtson, 1996), interpersonal competence (Rubin & Martin, 1998; Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988), life satisfaction (Barbato & Perse, 1992), communication satisfaction (Morman & Floyd, 1999), lack of loneliness (Downs & Javidi, 1990), and lack of depression (Mackinnon, Henderson, & Andrews, 1993; Oliver et al., 1993).

By way of extending these previous findings, which are based on the receipt of affectionate communication (usually within specific relational or situational contexts), I examine in the present study people's general tendencies to communicate affection to others and the individual- and relational-level characteristics associated with those

who, by trait, are highly affectionate communicators. AET posits that the expression of affection, not just the receipt of it, engenders a number of individual and relational benefits through the contributions it makes to forming and sustaining human pair bonds, whether romantic or platonic. As an initial test of this fundamental prediction, I advanced several hypotheses regarding differences in the individual and relational characteristics associated with high-affection and low-affection communicators.

Hypotheses

AET can be used to predict that affectionate communication benefits communicators both at an individual level (in terms of their own well being) and at a social level (in terms of the quality of their social and relational interactions). For clarity's sake I have divided the hypotheses into these two general areas.

Individual-level predictions. AET suggests that the more affection one communicates to others, the more successful he or she will be in terms of survival and in terms of short-term and long-term fertility. In line with this reasoning (although not always drawing explicitly on it), numerous investigations have indicated that affection received in specific relational contexts is associated with a number of psychological, physical, and emotional benefits to the recipient. Here, I extend these previous findings by applying AET's logic to the task of accounting for characteristics associated with those who, as a trait, are highly affectionate communicators. Proposed is that people who differ in this trait—one's general level of affection communicated to others—will differ in a number of individual characteristics and benefits. In this investigation I chose to focus on three types of individual-level characteristics: mental and psychological well being, attachment styles and patterns, and gender role orientations.

With respect to the first two of these three types, I propose that high affection communicators are not only different from, but advantaged relative to, low affection communicators. This prediction follows from AET's principle that affectionate communication contributes to individual viability by eliciting human (and economic) capital—those physical, psychological, and instrumental benefits that contribute to one's health and well being. Here, I examine five indices of psychological and mental well being as potential correlates with one's trait affection level: one's general sense of happiness; one's self esteem; one's level of depression; the amount of stress one generally experiences; and, one's overall level of general mental health. On the basis of AET's prediction that affectionate communication elicits the resources that contribute to long-term viability and well being, I hypothesize that, for each of these indices, high affection communicators will have the advantage. Specifically:

- H1: High affection communicators report (a) greater happiness, (b) higher self esteem, (c) less depression, (d) less stress, and (e) greater overall mental health than do low affection communicators.

A second set of indices concerns attachment, a variable that represents one's generic orientation toward personal relationships, which ostensibly has its roots in one's earliest interactions with a primary caregiver (usually one's mother). According to attachment theory, the orientation that is forged during the initial days of life exerts influence throughout childhood and adulthood as individuals develop and maintain

relationships with others. In research on adults, attachment has been conceptualized both as a mutually exclusive *style* (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) and as a set of fluid, continuous *patterns* (Guerrero, 1994). In the former (and more common) case, participants self-select into one of a set of attachment style categories, each of which represents a dominant style of attachment behaviors. Although individual taxonomies vary, a common approach is to use four style categories: (a) Secure, representing those who desire interpersonal closeness and fear neither abandonment nor “suffocation” from becoming too close; (b) Preoccupied, representing those who desire intimacy yet never feel satisfied with the amount of intimacy they receive from others; (c) Dismissive, representing those who feel little need for intimate relationships; and, (d) Fearful/Avoidant, representing those whose worry about getting *too* close to others causes them to avoid closeness.

Researchers have recently begun advocating a different conceptual approach, in which attachment is treated not as a set of mutually exclusive styles but as a set of continuous patterns, all of which are manifested to some degree by every individual. In her conceptualization, Guerrero (1994) proposed four such patterns: (a) Discomfort with Closeness, representing the extent to which one feels uncomfortable getting interpersonally close to others; (b) Preoccupation with Relationships, representing the extent to which people fear that they will never have as much intimacy with others as they would like; (c) Fear of Intimacy, representing one’s level of worry about getting too intimate with others; and, (d) Relationships as Secondary, representing the extent to which one believes that maintaining personal relationships is not a priority.

Both conceptual (and operational) approaches to attachment are used in the current study. Because affection is a primary communicative tool in the development and maintenance of personal relationships (Bell & Healey, 1992; Owen, 1987), I reason here that, with respect to attachment patterns, a high level of affection is associated with lower levels of discomfort with closeness, fear of intimacy, and perception of relationships as being of secondary importance. How one’s trait affection level might influence his or her preoccupation with relationships is unclear, however, since the fear of not receiving sufficient intimacy from others could either inhibit relational development or be a catalyst for it.

Following the same logic, I predict that, with respect to attachment styles, a high level of trait affection is associated with the secure attachment style and a low level is associated with the dismissive and fearful/avoidant styles. How trait affection level might influence the preoccupied attachment style is, again, unclear. Given this reasoning, I propose the following:

- H2: Compared to low affection communicators, high affection communicators report (a) less discomfort with closeness, (b) less fear of intimacy, and (c) less of a perception that relationships are of secondary importance.
- H3: Compared to low affection communicators, high affection communicators are (a) more likely to have a secure attachment style, (b) less likely to have a dismissive attachment style, and (c) less likely to have a fearful/avoidant attachment style.

I also offer the following question:

RQ1: How do high and low affection communicators differ, if at all, in their (a) level of preoccupation with relationships, and (b) tendency to have a preoccupied attachment style?

The last set of individual-level characteristics examined here concerns psychological gender role orientations. This refers not to one's biological sex but to one's level of masculinity and femininity. As with attachment, the contemporary conceptual approach is to treat gender role orientations as fluid and continuous, rather than dichotomous, such that every individual manifests both masculinity and femininity to some degree (Bem, 1974; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Previous investigations focusing on affection in specific relationships have reported direct correlations between femininity and affectionate communication (e.g., Floyd & Morman, 2000a; Morman & Floyd, 1999). This finding is to be expected when one considers that both traditional and contemporary conceptualizations of femininity include responsiveness to relational issues as a primary element. Again, because affection is a key communicative behavior in relationship maintenance, it stands to reason that it is positively associated with psychological femininity, and I extend previous investigations by predicting the same association with one's trait level of affection communicated:

H4: High affection communicators are more feminine than low affection communicators.

How trait affection level is related to psychological masculinity is less clear. One might intuit that, because traditional conceptualizations of masculinity have emphasized individual achievement and control over concerns for relationships, masculinity should be inversely associated with communication behaviors such as expressing affection. However, two recent investigations (Floyd & Morman, 2000; Morman & Floyd, 1999), each using a different masculinity scale, found direct linear relationships between masculinity and affection communicated in specific relationships. Because of this discrepancy, and because AET provides no compelling reason to predict one pattern over the other, I address the influence of masculinity in the form of a second research question:

RQ2: How do high and low affection communicators differ, if at all, in their masculinity?

Social-level predictions. The second set of hypotheses concerns the social- and relational-level characteristics of high and low affection communicators, as opposed to their individual psychological and mental characteristics. Because AET draws specific links between affectionate communication and the development and maintenance of pair bonds (whether romantic or platonic), my general prediction here is that high affection communicators are more relationally successful than low affection communicators. I use four primary indices in the present study to examine this prediction: one's general level of social activity and interaction; the amount of affectionate communication one receives from others; one's likelihood of being in a romantic relationship; and, for those currently in a romantic relationship, their level of relational satisfaction.

Emerging first is the expectation that, because affectionate communication engenders personal relationships, it is associated with greater social activity and it begets greater affectionate communication in return. (The latter prediction reflects Gouldner's (1960) moral norm of reciprocity, a principle suggesting that expenditures of any type of social resource invoke a sense of obligation on the recipients to respond in kind):

H5: High affection communicators (a) are more socially outgoing, and (b) receive more affection from others than do low affection communicators.

A better litmus test of the effects of affectionate communication on relationships, perhaps, would be confirmation of the prediction that high affection communicators are more likely than low affection communicators to have romantic relationships in the first place. This hypothesis directly reflects AET's principle that affectionate communication contributes to the development and maintenance of romantic attachments by signaling positive reproductive options. Accordingly, I extend this reasoning to predict that high affection communicators are more likely to be satisfied in their romantic relationships than are low affection communicators. Stated as a formal hypothesis:

H6: Compared to low affection communicators, high affection communicators (a) are more likely to be in romantic relationships, and (b) are more satisfied with their romantic relationships.

METHOD

Participants

Participants ($N = 109$) were 45 male and 64 female adults ranging in age from 18 to 60 years ($M = 26.71$ years, $SD = 10.78$). A substantial majority (84.3%) lived in the southwestern United States, whereas 6.5% lived in the Midwest, 3.6% in the South/Southeast, 2.8% in the Northwest, 1.9% in the Northeast, and 0.9% in Alaska. Most of the participants (79.8%) had never been married, whereas 16.5% were married, and 3.7% were divorced. At the time of the study, 17.4% of participants had a high school education or less, 43.1% had completed some college but had no degree, 33.0% had an associate and/or baccalaureate degree, and 6.5% had a graduate or professional degree. Roughly three in four participants (76.1%) were Caucasian, whereas 12.8% were Hispanic, 5.5% were Asian, 3.7% were Black/African-American, 0.9% were Native American, and 3.7% were of other ethnic origins.¹

Procedure

To maximize variance on trait affection levels, I used a known-groups method for participant recruitment. Undergraduate communication majors at a large southwestern university received extra course credit for recruiting the participation of the most affectionate and the least affectionate persons they knew. Each student received two questionnaires with instructions to give them to the most and least affectionate males or females he or she knew and to ask those prospective participants to complete the questionnaires anonymously and return them directly to the investigator in the postage-paid envelope provided. Students told participants that they were to re-

ceive extra credit for recruiting their participation in a study of "personality and communication styles"; the participants were not informed (either by students or by the questionnaires) that they were selected on the basis of their trait affection levels. Those who agreed to participate completed an 11-page questionnaire and returned it with no identifying information to the investigator.

The high affection communicator group consisted of 55 adults (16 male, 39 female) and the low affection communicator group consisted of 54 adults (29 male, 25 female). Participants in the two conditions did not differ from each other in terms of their age, education level, income level, area of the country in which they live, or in the distribution of any of the ethnic groups.

Measures

Affection received from others was measured with a six-item scale developed for this study. Items addressed participants' tendencies to receive expressions of affection from others (e.g., "I get quite a bit of affection from others," and "People are always telling me that they like me, love me, or care about me"). *Self esteem* was measured with the ten-item Self Esteem Scale developed by Rosenberg (1965). Items included "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself," and "I am able to do things as well as most other people." *Happiness* was assessed with the 29-item Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle, Martin, & Crossland, 1989). Items included "I feel on top of the world," and "I am constantly in a state of joy and elation." *Social activity* and *social isolation* were measured with six- and five-item scales, respectively, that were developed for this study. Items on the former scale included "My calendar is always filled with social activities," and "I would characterize myself as a 'homebody'" (reverse scored). Items on the latter scale included "I don't have a lot of close friends in my life," and "Socially, I feel pretty isolated most of the time."

Stress was measured with the 14-item Stress Scale developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983). Items asked participants how often, in the past month, they have experienced stress, nervousness, anger, difficulty coping with irritations, and difficulty dealing with changes, among other things. *Depression* was assessed with the Iowa Short Form (Kohout, Berkman, Evans, & Cornoni-Huntley, 1993) of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression (CES-D) scale (Radloff, 1977). The 11-item measure asked participants how frequently they experience symptoms such as loss of appetite, changes in sleep patterns, or self-dislike. *General mental health* was measured with the 12-item General Health Questionnaire developed by Banks (1983; Banks, Clegg, Jackson, Kemp, Stafford, & Walls, 1980). The items assessed the level of one's mental and emotional health.

Relationship satisfaction was measured (for participants who were in romantic relationships) with the seven-item Relationship Assessment Scale developed by Hendrick (1988). Items included "How well does your partner meet your needs?" and "How good is your relationship compared to most?" Four relational attachment patterns, *discomfort with closeness*, *preoccupation with relational success*, *fear of intimacy*, and *viewing relationships as being of secondary importance* were measured with 5-, 11-, 6-, and 5-item scales, respectively, that were developed by Guerrero (1994; see also Feeney, Noller, & Hanarahan, 1994). Discomfort with closeness items included "I feel uncomfortable when people get close to me." Preoccupation items included "I wonder how I could cope without someone to love me." Fear of intimacy items included "I would like to trust others, but I have a hard time doing so." Items measuring the

view that relationships are secondary included "Achieving things is much more important to me than building relationships." In addition, participants reported on their primary *attachment style*, using a measure developed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). The measure consisted of four paragraphs, each describing one of the major attachment styles: dismissive, fearful/avoidant, secure, and preoccupied. Participants were asked to indicate which paragraph best described them. *Masculinity* and *femininity* were assessed with the 20-item Assertiveness-Responsiveness Scale developed by Richmond and McCroskey (1990). To measure masculinity, the scale asked participants how much they saw themselves as "assertive," "independent," and "competitive," among other items. Femininity items included "compassionate," "gentle," and "sincere."

All of the measures employed seven-point scales wherein higher scores reflect a greater amount or intensity of the variable. Internal reliability estimates and intercorrelations for all continuous measures appear in Table 1. Because I developed scales for affection received from others, social activity, and social isolation for this study, I have included these scales in their entirety in Appendix A.

Manipulation Check

To ensure that those in the high affection and low affection conditions differed significantly in their trait levels of affection, a ten-item measure of *trait affection given*, developed for this study, was used. Items on the scale addressed participants' overall levels of affectionate behavior (e.g., "I am always telling my loved ones how much I care about them," "Anyone who knows me well would say that I'm pretty affectionate"). Interitem reliability appears in Table 1; the scale, in its entirety, appears in Appendix A.

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

The measure of trait affection given was analyzed for differences between high affection communicators and low affection communicators using a two-way ANOVA, in which manipulation condition (high v. low) and biological sex were the independent variables. Based on the finding that North American women are more affectionate than North American men, in general (see, e.g., Pendell, 2000), I included biological sex in the model to ensure that a main effect of manipulation would not be rendered uninterpretable by a two-way interaction. The ANOVA produced a significant main effect for manipulation, $F(1, 105) = 1278.86, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .92$. The means, which are reported in Table 1, revealed that those in the high affection condition reported higher trait affection given than did those in the low affection condition, indicating success for the manipulation. The main effect for sex and the interaction effect were both nonsignificant.

Omnibus Analyses

Continuous dependent variables were analyzed using multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) to obtain omnibus effect sizes. Variables were analyzed in clusters based on their conceptual relatedness, significant average zero-order correlation, and significant Bartlett's tests of sphericity. The four continuous attachment pattern measures (discomfort with closeness, preoccupation, fear of intimacy, and view of relationships as secondary) were analyzed together (average $r = .37, \chi^2(6) =$

TABLE 1
Intercorrelations, Internal Reliability Estimates, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study Variables (N = 109)

Variable	α^1	High ² M/SD	Low M/SD	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
01. Trait affection given ³	.92	6.43/0.35	3.38/0.50								
02. Masculinity	.85	5.23/0.95	4.72/1.08	.25**							
03. Femininity	.89	6.24/0.57	4.78/0.37	.75**	.12						
04. Depression	.72	3.08/0.71	3.66/0.75	-.37**	-.20*	-.28**					
05. Affection received from others	.86	5.97/0.85	4.23/0.87	.74**	.23*	.64**	-.33**				
06. Self esteem	.90	6.07/0.81	4.82/1.01	.54**	.39**	.39**	-.54**	.55**			
07. Social activity	.86	5.23/1.23	3.88/1.34	.48**	.22*	.40**	-.36**	.59**	.44**		
08. Social isolation	.74	2.18/0.98	3.67/1.20	-.58**	-.16	-.47**	.54**	-.70**	-.56**	-.75**	
09. Stress	.82	3.09/0.86	4.00/0.70	-.51**	-.26**	-.36**	.60**	-.45**	-.63**	-.30**	.45**
10. Discomfort with closeness	.81	2.31/0.88	4.30/0.84	-.80**	-.15	-.68**	.43**	-.68**	-.52**	-.47**	.59**
11. Preoccupation with relationships	.72	3.76/0.92	3.75/0.64	.03	-.06	.10	.31**	-.01	-.36**	-.05	.17
12. Fear of intimacy	.75	2.85/0.89	4.37/0.82	-.69**	-.15	-.57**	.49**	-.53**	-.47**	-.33**	.48**
13. Relationships as secondary	.56	3.20/0.75	4.31/0.87	-.62**	-.10	-.51**	.31**	-.63**	-.37**	-.55**	.56**
14. Happiness	.92	5.16/0.74	3.98/0.73	.65**	.30**	.52**	-.60**	.64**	.72**	.63**	-.66**
15. General mental health	.87	5.62/0.75	4.49/0.90	.55**	.36**	.38**	-.68**	.60**	.86**	.48**	-.67**
16. Relationship satisfaction ⁴	.69	5.78/0.46	4.89/0.86	.53**	-.01	.36**	-.41**	.43**	.35**	.17	-.38**

TABLE 1 (cont.)

Variable	09	10	11	12	13	14	15
10. Discomfort with closeness	.46**						
11. Preoccupation with relationships	.37**	.02					
12. Fear of intimacy	.49**	.85**	.18				
13. Relationships as secondary	.34**	.59**	-.03	.52**			
14. Happiness	-.70**	-.62**	-.22*	-.54**	-.48**		
15. General mental health	-.78**	-.53**	-.43**	-.53**	-.39**	-.79**	
16. Relationship satisfaction ⁴	-.42**	-.44**	-.19	-.47**	-.42**	.40**	.41**

Notes. ¹Internal reliability estimates are based on Cronbach's alpha. ²Variables were measured on seven-point scales wherein higher values indicate a greater frequency or intensity of the variable. ³Manipulation check variable. ⁴N = 66. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

191.11, $p < .001$) in a two-way MANOVA, with manipulation condition and biological sex as the independent variables.² The analysis produced a significant multivariate main effect for manipulation, $\Lambda = .41$, $F(4, 102) = 36.50$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .59$. Happiness and self esteem ($r = .72$, $\chi^2(1) = 78.45$, $p < .001$) were analyzed in a second MANOVA that produced a significant multivariate main effect for manipulation, $\Lambda = .56$, $F(2, 104) = 40.41$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .44$. Depression, stress, and mental health (average $r = .68$, $\chi^2(3) = 167.36$, $p < .001$) were analyzed in a third MANOVA that produced significant multivariate main effects for manipulation, $\Lambda = .64$, $F(3, 102) = 19.06$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .36$, and for sex, $\Lambda = .90$, $F(3, 102) = 4.01$, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$. Social activity and social isolation ($r = -.75$, $\chi^2(1) = 88.83$, $p < .001$) were analyzed in a fourth MANOVA that produced a significant multivariate main effect for manipulation, $\Lambda = .70$, $F(2, 104) = 22.46$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .30$. Due to a lack of intercorrelation, the remaining continuous dependent variables of relationship satisfaction, affection received, masculinity, and femininity were analyzed in separate univariate ANOVAs, the results of which are reported below.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Descriptive results. For descriptive purposes, I examined zero-order correlations between the manipulation check measure (trait affection given) and the continuous dependent measures. The coefficients appear in Table 1. Trait affection given was significantly correlated with every continuous dependent measure except preoccupation; nearly all of the correlations represent medium or large effect sizes. Trait affection given was directly related to self esteem, social activity, happiness, mental health, affection received, masculinity, femininity, and relationship satisfaction (for those currently in romantic relationships). It was inversely related to depression, social isolation, stress, discomfort with closeness, view of relationships as secondary, and fear of intimacy. All of these results are consistent with those predicted. However, zero-order correlations do not provide the best tests of the hypotheses because they fail to account for relationships among the dependent variables and for the potential moderating effects of biological sex. Univariate results from the two-way analyses of variance were used to test the individual hypotheses directly.

Individual-level predictions. The first hypothesis predicted that high affection communicators are happier, have higher self esteem, are less depressed, have less stress, and have greater overall mental health than do low affection communicators. Univariate main effects for the affection manipulation were significant for happiness, $F(1, 105) = 71.58$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .41$; self esteem, $F(1, 105) = 54.05$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .34$; depression, $F(1, 104) = 24.59$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$; stress, $F(1, 104) = 39.73$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .28$; and overall mental health, $F(1, 104) = 55.39$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .35$. Means and standard deviations for these and all continuous variables, reported separately for high and low affection communicators, appear in Table 1. As hypothesized, high affection communicators reported greater happiness, higher self esteem, less depression, less stress, and greater overall mental health than did low affection communicators. The first hypothesis is supported.

The second hypothesis predicted that, with respect to attachment patterns, high affection communicators report less discomfort with closeness, less fear of intimacy, and less of a perception of relationships as being of secondary importance than do low affection communicators. Univariate main effects emerged for the manipulation condition for discomfort with closeness, $F(1, 105) = 133.21$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .56$;

fear of intimacy, $F(1, 105) = 89.28, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .46$; and the perception that relationships are of secondary importance, $F(1, 105) = 51.53, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .33$. As hypothesized, high affection communicators reported less discomfort with closeness, less fear of intimacy, and less of a tendency to view relationships as being of secondary importance than did low affection communicators. No main or interaction effects of biological sex were observed. The second hypothesis is supported.

With respect to attachment styles, as opposed to attachment patterns, the third hypothesis predicted that high affection communicators are more likely than low affection communicators to have a secure attachment style and that low affection communicators are more likely than high affection communicators to have dismissive or fearful/avoidant styles. Two significant differences emerged between the high and low affection communicators. The cell means for each of the four attachment styles, divided by manipulation condition, are reported in Table 2. As hypothesized, high affection communicators were more likely than low affection communicators to have a secure attachment style, $\chi^2(1) = 17.31, p < .05$. As further hypothesized, low affection communicators were more likely than high affection communicators to have a fearful/avoidant attachment style, $\chi^2(1) = 14.29, p < .05$. A nonsignificant difference was observed for the dismissive attachment styles. The third hypothesis is supported with respect to secure and fearful/avoidant styles.

TABLE 2
Cell Sizes for Four Attachment Styles by Manipulation Condition

Attachment Style	High Affection <i>n</i>	Low Affection <i>n</i>
Dismissive	9	14
Fearful/Avoidant	3	23
Secure	41	11
Preoccupied	2	6

The first research question concerned how high and low affection communicators might differ in their level of preoccupation with relationships and in their tendency to have a preoccupied attachment style. The univariate main effect of affection manipulation for preoccupation with relationships was nonsignificant; the means indicate that high and low affection communicators had nearly identical levels of preoccupation ($M = 3.76$ v. 3.75 , respectively). With respect to the preoccupied attachment style, two of the high affection communicators and six of the low affection communicators indicated that this was their attachment style. This difference is nonsignificant, $\chi^2(1) < 1$.

The fourth hypothesis was that high affection communicators report greater femininity than do low affection communicators. The second research question addressed how the two groups differ, if at all, in their masculinity. Femininity was influenced by a significant univariate main effect for manipulation condition, $F(1, 104) = 102.27, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .50$; and by a sex-by-manipulation interaction, $F(1, 104) = 4.09, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. As hypothesized, high affection communicators reported greater femininity than did low affection communicators. Because the interaction was ordinal, the main effect was not rendered uninterpretable. The interaction indicated, surprisingly, that the greatest femininity was reported by high-affection men ($M = 6.36, SD = 0.62$), followed by high-affection women ($M = 6.19, SD = 0.55$). These groups reported significantly greater femininity than did low-affection women ($M = 5.01$,

$SD = 0.91$) and low-affection men ($M = 4.58, SD = 0.79$). The fourth hypothesis is supported.

Masculinity was subject to univariate main effects for manipulation condition, $F(1, 104) = 10.32, p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$; and for sex, $F(1, 104) = 7.63, p = .007$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. High affection communicators reported greater masculinity than did low affection communicators. Moreover, as one might anticipate, men reported greater masculinity ($M = 5.22, SD = 0.95$) than did women ($M = 4.82, SD = 1.08$).

Social-level predictions. The fifth hypothesis was that, compared to low affection communicators, high affection communicators are more socially outgoing and receive more affection from others. The first part of the prediction was tested using two dependent variables, social activity and social isolation. The manipulation condition had significant univariate main effects on social activity, $F(1, 105) = 24.31, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$; and on social isolation, $F(1, 105) = 45.00, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .30$. Consistent with the hypothesis, high affection communicators reported greater social activity and less social isolation than did low affection communicators. Affection received from others was also influenced by a univariate main effect for manipulation condition, $F(1, 105) = 98.90, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .49$. As predicted, high affection communicators reported receiving more affection from others than did low affection communicators. The fifth hypothesis is supported.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis predicted that high affection communicators are more likely than low affection communicators to be in romantic relationships and are more likely to be satisfied with those relationships. Among the high affection communicators, 41 participants, or 75%, reported being in a romantic relationship (either a marriage or a dating relationship); among the low affection communicators, 25 participants, or 46%, reported being in a romantic relationship. This difference is significant, $z = 2.73, p < .05$. Among those participants from both groups who were involved in romantic relationships at the time of the study, high affection communicators reported greater relational satisfaction than did low affection communicators, $F(1, 62) = 25.79, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .29$. The sixth hypothesis is supported.

A summary of the differences between high and low affection communicators appears in Table 3.

Linear combination. For exploratory purposes, I conducted a final analysis to determine the best linear combination of the dependent variables to predict one's trait affection level. Although I had predefined groups of high and low affection communicators, I elected to use a stepwise multiple regression rather than a multiple discriminant analysis so as to take full advantage of the range of variance on the measure of trait affection given. The analysis used trait affection given as the criterion variable and included all of the other study variables as predictors (including dummy-coded versions of sex, romantic relationship status, and attachment style). Multicollinearity diagnostics led me to use standardized predictor variables. The regression produced a three-variable final solution, which included (in descending order of predictive power): discomfort with closeness ($\beta = -.79, p < .001$), femininity ($\beta = .42, p < .001$), and affection received ($\beta = .24, p = .008$), $R^2 = .76$, adjusted $R^2 = .75$, $F(3, 61) = 64.82, p < .001$.

DISCUSSION

Much has been made in the affection literature of the benefits of receiving affectionate communication; guided by the principles of affection exchange theory, I pro-

TABLE 3
Summary of Significant Differences Between High and Low Affection Communicators

Compared to low affection communicators, high affection communicators are...

1. Happier.
 2. More self assured.
 3. More comfortable with interpersonal closeness.
 4. Less fearful of intimacy.
 5. Less likely to view relationships as being of secondary importance.
 6. More likely to have a secure attachment style.
 7. Less likely to have a fearful/avoidant attachment style.
 8. Less likely to be depressed.
 9. Less stressed.
 10. In better mental health.
 11. More masculine.
 12. More feminine.
 13. More likely to engage in regular social activity.
 14. Less likely to experience social isolation.
 15. More likely to receive affection from others.
 16. More likely to be in romantic relationships.
 17. More satisfied with their romantic relationships.
-

posed herein that numerous benefits are also associated by expressing it. Using a known-groups method, I tested the prediction that individuals who are commonly highly affectionate with others are advantaged, relative to those who express little affection, in a number of psychological, mental, social, and relational characteristics. The data provided substantial support for the various hypotheses. Specifically, in comparison to low affection communicators, high affection communicators reported higher levels of happiness, self esteem, social activity, and mental health. They had less stress, depression, discomfort with closeness, fear of intimacy, and social isolation and were less likely to think of personal relationships as being of secondary importance. They were more likely to have a secure attachment style and less likely to have a fearful/avoidant attachment style. They received more affection from others. Although it may not necessarily be considered a benefit, high affection communicators reported higher scores in both masculinity and femininity. Finally, they were more likely to be in a romantic relationship and were more satisfied in that relationship.

Considered in concert, these results point to several advantages associated with the communication of affection, a point that is made even more salient when considered in relation to the numerous studies that have examined the risks and problems of affectionate behavior (e.g., Floyd & Morman, 2000b; Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999; Morman & Floyd, 1998). It must be acknowledged, however, that these results (being nonexperimental in nature) preclude speculation about causality. Individuals may be advantaged because they are high affection communicators, or they may be high affection communicators because they are advantaged. Although AET posits the former, the causal chain may also be recursive, such that affection begets advantage, which begets more affection. The current data leave this issue unclarified, but they point to numerous (and often substantial) associations between affectionate communication and individual and social benefits.

This caveat notwithstanding, the present results have important, albeit somewhat intuitive, implications for both scholastic and clinical practice. First, they suggest that a high trait level of affectionate expression is a general communication pat-

tern associated with social and psychological well being. Because they have higher self esteem than low affection communicators, high affection communicators may be seen by others as more competent and may achieve a greater level of social or economic success over time. Because they have more social contact and receive more affection from others than do low affection communicators, they may also avail themselves of other interpersonal benefits, such as instrumental favors or social support, to a greater degree. Because they are less likely to experience stress or depression than low affection communicators, they may also fare better in warding off other psychological problems or physical illnesses. Tests of these and other benefits associated with affection must be deferred to future studies, of course, but the current results provide ample justification for such investigations. The associations between affection and relational status and satisfaction can be important in clinical settings as well, insofar as they augment research on the contribution of positive dyadic communication patterns to long-term relational success (see, e.g., Birchler, Weiss, & Vincent, 1975; Gottman, 1994, 1996, 1998). Future research may extend these findings by examining the effects of trait affection level on number of close friends, relational satisfaction with family members, or longitudinal marital stability.

Some additional limitations should temper interpretations of the results but also provide important avenues for future research. First, the sample was largely homogeneous with respect to ethnicity, marital history, and current regional residence. Moreover, although the age range and variance were relatively large, the average participant was only a few years older than the modal college student. Each of these attributes of the sample makes the determination of external validity problematic, in that each has been shown to influence affectionate behavior to some degree (see Andersen, Andersen, & Lustig, 1987; Floyd & Morman, 2000a; Heslin & Alper, 1983; Pendell, 2000). Although the high and low affection groups in the present study did not significantly differ from each other in any of these characteristics, greater demographic diversity in future samples may allow researchers to partition the variance associated with each and better understand their relative contributions to affectionate communication.

A second threat to external validity is the small sample size. All things considered, of course, larger sample sizes are more representative of the populations from which they were drawn. However, one should also recall that low sample size attenuates statistical power. The substantial effect sizes that emerged in the current study *despite* such attenuation suggest that the true magnitude of these effects is even more substantial. This and other issues raised by the methodological limitations of this study merit attention in future investigations.

NOTES

- ¹ These percentages sum to greater than 100 because some participants reported belonging to more than one ethnic group
- ² I have included biological sex as an independent variable in all analyses of variance to allow for interaction effects with manipulation condition that might qualify interpretations of the manipulation main effects.

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APPENDIX A

Lists of Items Used in Scales Developed for this Study

Trait affection given (manipulation check measure)

1. I consider myself to be a very affectionate person.
2. I am always telling my loved ones how much I care about them.
3. When I feel affection for someone, I usually express it.
4. I have a hard time telling people that I love them or care about them.*
5. I'm not very good at expressing affection.*
6. I'm not a very affectionate person.*
7. I love giving people hugs or putting my arms around them.
8. I don't tend to express affection to other people very much.*
9. Anyone who knows me well would say that I'm pretty affectionate.
10. Expressing affection to other people makes me uncomfortable.*

Trait affection received

1. People hug me quite a bit.
2. People are always telling me that they like me, love me, or care about me.
3. I don't get very much affection from other people.*
4. I get quite a bit of affection from others.
5. Many people I know are quite affectionate with me.
6. Most of the people I know don't express affection to me very often.*

Social activity

1. I take part in quite a few social activities.
2. I am quite active in my church, clubs, community organizations, and/or social groups.
3. I don't usually get too involved in clubs, groups, or social activities.*
4. I would characterize myself as a "homebody."*
5. My calendar is always filled with social activities.
6. I am always spending time with friends or taking part in social events.

Social isolation

1. I don't have a lot of close friends in my life.
2. Socially, I feel pretty isolated most of the time.
3. I spend much of my free time alone.
4. I have some very close friends whom I interact with often.*
5. I rarely feel isolated or "cut off" from people, even when I'm alone.*

Note. *reverse-scored